

MEMORANDUM

6634-X

## NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

INFORMATIONSECRET/SENSITIVE

MORI C05106264

September 8, 1972

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE  
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

MEMORANDUM FOR:

MR. KISSINGER

FROM:

State Dept. review  
completed

JOHN H. HOLDRIDGE

SUBJECT:

GVN Ceasefire Planning

25X1

A recent report [redacted] (Tab A) indicates that the GVN is continuing urgent but somewhat unfocused ceasefire contingency planning. The report -- which details a conversation with President Thieu's special assistant for Security Affairs, Lt. General Quang -- suggests that the GVN's thinking about ceasefire has progressed little since our last memorandum to you on this subject, dated August 9 (Tab B).

General Quang reportedly told his listeners, several ARVN officers, that a ceasefire is certain to occur. He noted that President Thieu believes current GVN contingency planning is too vague and has asked that new studies be more detailed. Quang emphasized that further ceasefire planning should specifically address subjects such as proposals for action on the "Paris front," a scenario for reaching a final total solution after a ceasefire, and separating the NLF from the North Vietnamese (e.g., what to do with the NLF army and how to separate NVA fillers from NLF units).

While planning for a post-ceasefire victory and for measures at the Paris talks represent new elements in the GVN's thinking, there is little evidence that the GVN has otherwise conceptually advanced its strategy in dealing with overall ceasefire questions. For example, much of the reported conversation dealt with rather legalistic, non-essential issues such as composition of an International Control Commission and of the GVN's own ceasefire research committee. General Quang's guidance on new contingency planning also apparently continues important gaps which similarly marked earlier ARVN ceasefire planning. Quang's remarks, for example, still do not focus on really crucial ceasefire issues of civilian population control (e.g., what to do about returning refugees or releasing civilian prisoners), the integrity of ARVN (e.g., demobilization, desertion), the necessarily expanded role of the civil police, and modalities of civilian and military transportation and communications within GVN-held areas or through areas occupied by the enemy.

SECRET/SENSITIVE

CLASSIFIED BY CIA  
EXEMPT FROM GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION  
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652  
EXEMPTION CATEGORY 5B(2)  
AUTOMATICALLY DECLASSIFIED ON \_\_\_\_\_

WARNING NOTICE -- SENSITIVE

INTELLIGENCE SOURCES AND METHODS INVOLVED

SECRET/SENSITIVE

2

Although the military aspects of the GVN's ceasefire planning appear to be falling behind extensive enemy preparations and remain distracted by some non-essential issues, President Thieu has moved more boldly in the political sphere to prepare South Vietnam for an end of the fighting. Thieu has used his emergency powers to tighten controls across the board in an effort to increase central government powers and to better protect himself from any internal opposition to a ceasefire accord. Recently he issued decree laws which toughen press regulations and disciplinary procedures for GVN employees. He has abolished hamlet elections and streamlined local administration, increasing province-level controls. He has also significantly increased penalties for corruption by state cadre and for common crimes, thus giving himself a better public image while also enhancing his political hold over civil and military personnel whose disloyalty could be rewarded with prosecution for corruption. Finally, there are persistent reports that Thieu plans -- at some later date -- to tighten political party regulations to better order the almost anarchic political party situation. Despite Thieu's pre-ceasefire measures in the political field, the report at Tab A indicates that the GVN's military planning remains rudimentary and requires immediate and forceful guidance from the President on critical issues such as those outlined above.

SECRET/SENSITIVE

25X1

25X1

25X1

SECRET/SENSITIVE

S-1028

*Memorandum For:*

**Dr. Henry A. Kissinger**  
 Assistant to the President  
 for National Security Affairs

Attached is a report from [redacted]

[redacted] conversation between President Thieu's Assistant for Security Affairs, Lt. General Quang, and several other South Vietnamese officials concerning cease-fire planning. The conversation once again indicates that President Thieu is now giving a high priority to such planning, but it also indicates that work by the GVN on cease-fire plans is at present still in a fairly rudimentary stage.

This report has been seen in Saigon by Ambassador Bunker, General Weyand and Deputy Ambassador Whitehouse. In Washington we are sending it, via this channel, only to you and Secretary Rogers. In slightly different format, we are also sending it to Secretary Laird, Deputy Secretary Rush, Under Secretary Johnson, Admiral Moorer and Deputy Assistant Secretary Sullivan. I would appreciate it if you would return this report to my office when you are finished with it.

*[Signature]*  
 Richard Helms  
 DIRECTOR

31 August 1972  
 SECRET/SENSITIVE

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~



WARNING NOTICE  
SENSITIVE INTELLIGENCE SOURCES  
AND METHODS INVOLVED

25X1

30 AUGUST 1972

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: FURTHER DISCUSSIONS ON GVN CEASEFIRE PLANNING

1. ON 26 AUGUST 1972 PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANT FOR MILITARY AND SECURITY AFFAIRS LIEUTENANT GENERAL DANG VAN QUANG MET WITH SEVERAL OFFICERS FROM THE NATIONAL DEFENSE COLLEGE, INCLUDING THE COMMANDANT, LIEUTENANT GENERAL VINH LOC, TO DISCUSS FURTHER THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM (GVN) CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR A POSSIBLE CEASEFIRE.

2. QUANG NOTED THAT SINCE THE U.S. AMBASSADOR TO THE PARIS PEACE TALKS HAD MENTIONED THE POSSIBILITY OF A CEASEFIRE, THE GVN SHOULD THEREFORE MAKE SERIOUS PLANS FOR IT, AND NOT LET IT BE SAID THAT "WE ARE JUST

EYES ONLY

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

PLAYING AROUND" WITH PLANS. QUANG SAID THAT PRESIDENT THIEU HAD INSTRUCTED HIM TO DISCUSS FURTHER THE CEASEFIRE STUDY PAPERS, WHICH HAD BEEN SUBMITTED TO HIM BY MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL DEFENSE COLLEGE. WHILE THE STUDY WAS GOOD AS FAR AS IT WENT, THE PROPOSALS FOR ACTION WERE TOO GENERAL. MORE SPECIFIC DETAILS WOULD THUS HAVE TO BE WORKED OUT. QUANG ADDED THAT THE PLANS SHOULD ALSO INCLUDE PROPOSALS FOR ACTION TO BE TAKEN "AT THE PARIS FRONT."

3. LOC ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE STUDY DID NOT CONTAIN PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION BUT POINTED OUT THAT IN ITS PRESENT FORM, THE STUDY PROPOSED OVERALL PRINCIPLES WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE APPROVED BEFORE

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

FINAL DETAILS COULD BE DRAWN UP. ONE FURTHER PROBLEM, LOC OBSERVED, WAS THAT WITH THE AMERICANS "TRAVELING AROUND BY NIGHT, CARRYING OUT SECRET NEGOTIATIONS," THEY COULD PUT THE GVN IN SOME KIND OF A BIND. WITHOUT RESPONDING TO LOC'S REMARK, QUANG WENT ON TO SAY THAT WHETHER A POLITICAL SOLUTION WAS AGREED ON OR ✓ NOT, IT WAS CERTAIN THAT THERE WOULD BE A CEASEFIRE, BUT HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT KIND OF A CEASEFIRE IT WOULD BE. HE OBSERVED THAT THE AMERICANS WANTED A CEASEFIRE FROM A MILITARY POINT OF VIEW - THAT IS, AN EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS AND AN END TO THE FIGHTING, AND SO ON. THE COMMUNISTS, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAD IN MIND A CEASEFIRE WHICH WOULD BE PART OF A POLITICAL

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~



SECRET/SENSITIVE

SOLUTION. QUANG NOTED THAT IT WAS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT THE SITUATION COULD EVOLVE INTO SOMETHING LIKE THAT WHICH EXISTED BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL, WHERE THERE WAS NO REAL SOLUTION TO THE WAR AT ALL, BUT NONETHELESS THERE WAS A CEASEFIRE. IN LIGHT OF THIS POSSIBILITY, QUANG FELT THE PLANS SHOULD INCLUDE A SCENARIO FOR REACHING A FINAL TOTAL SOLUTION AFTER A CEASEFIRE HAD GONE INTO EFFECT.

4. QUANG AGREED WITH THE OFFICERS THAT THERE WERE MANY UNKNOWN FACTORS WHICH WOULD HAVE A BEARING ON THE SPECIFIC PLANS FOR ACTION UNDER A CEASEFIRE. FOR ONE THING, IT WAS NOT KNOWN WHAT THE MILITARY SITUATION WOULD BE LIKE IN SOUTH VIETNAM (SVN) AT

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

THE TIME A CEASEFIRE WAS PUT INTO EFFECT. IT WAS HOPED, OF COURSE, THAT THE SITUATION WOULD BE AS FAVORABLE AS POSSIBLE TO THE GVN. IN THIS RESPECT, QUANG COMMENTED THAT THE GOAL BEHIND PRESIDENT THIEU'S THREE MONTH CAMPAIGN TO "BUILD VICTORY ON VICTORY" WAS TO RESTORE THE SITUATION TO THAT WHICH EXISTED PRIOR TO 29 MARCH 1972. ONE OF THE OFFICERS EXPRESSED THE OPINION THAT THE MOST BENEFICIAL SITUATION WOULD BE A RETURN TO THE SAME STATUS AS HAD EXISTED AT THE TIME OF THE 1954 GENEVA ACCORDS. HE THEN ASKED RHETORICALLY, IF THAT HAPPENED WOULD NORTH VIETNAM BE OBLIGED TO RETURN TO THE NORTH SINCE THEY HAD COMMITTED AGGRESSION? AND WOULD



~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

THERE BE INTERNATIONAL CONTROL OF A CEASEFIRE?  
SPEAKING FURTHER ABOUT INTERNATIONAL CONTROL, THE  
OFFICER THEN CRITICIZED THE PRESENT INTERNATIONAL  
CONTROL COMMISSION (ICC) FOR ITS LACK OF IMPARTIALITY  
AND LACK OF ABILITY TO TAKE PUNITIVE ACTION. QUANG  
/ ALSO FELT THAT THE ICC SHOULD HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO  
TAKE DISCIPLINARY ACTION WHEN THERE WERE VIOLATIONS  
OF A CEASEFIRE. THE OFFICER STATED THAT IN HIS OPINION  
THERE SHOULD BE A NEW ICC, WHICH WOULD CONSIST OF ASIAN  
NATIONS, SUCH AS JAPAN, PAKISTAN, OR MALAYSIA, WHICH  
HAD RELATIVELY CLEAR POSTURES AND WERE RELATIVELY  
UNPREJUDICED. OR, PERHAPS IT COULD CONSIST OF TWO  
ASIAN NATIONS, WITH A WESTERN COUNTRY, SUCH AS FRANCE,

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

SECRET/CONFIDENTIAL

ENGLAND, POLAND (SIC), OR CANADA, ADDED TO IT.

5. QUANG MENTIONED THAT, IN PREPARING THE CEASE-FIRE PLANS, ONE OF THE MAIN POINTS ON WHICH THE GVN SHOULD CONCENTRATE WAS SEPARATING THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (NLF) FROM THE NORTH VIETNAMESE. QUANG FELT THAT THE MOST DIFFICULT PROBLEM THE GVN WOULD ENCOUNTER WOULD BE WHAT TO DO WITH THE NLF ✓ ARMY, AND HOW TO SEPARATE THE NORTH VIETNAMESE FILLERS FROM THE NLF UNITS. HE ALSO REMARKED THAT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE WANTED TO TALK TO THE AMERICANS ABOUT ACHIEVING "LEGAL STATUS" FOR THE NLF AS A POLITICAL PARTY IN SVN.

6. ONE OF THE OFFICERS NOTED THAT ANOTHER POINT

WHICH MUST BE KEPT IN MIND IN PREPARING FOR A CEASE-FIRE WAS THAT ONCE IT WAS IMPLEMENTED, THE ARMY WOULD BE CUT BACK AND WOULD NO LONGER HAVE MUCH TO DO; HOWEVER, THE ROLE OF THE POLICE WOULD BE STRONG. IN ADDITION TO THEIR REGULAR DUTIES UNDER A CEASE-FIRE, THE POLICE WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR SECURITY, PUBLIC ORDER, AND EXECUTING THE INSTRUCTIONS OF A CEASEFIRE.

7. THERE WAS A GENERAL AGREEMENT AMONG QUANG AND THE OFFICERS PRESENT THAT MUCH MORE WORK NEEDED TO BE DONE ON THE CEASEFIRE PLANS. QUANG RAISED THE POSSIBILITY OF APPOINTING A "SPECIAL RESEARCH COMMITTEE" TO LOOK MORE DEEPLY INTO THE PROBLEMS INVOLVED. THE

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

OFFICERS AGREED THAT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA AND SUGGESTED THAT IT BE COMPOSED OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NATIONAL DEFENSE COLLEGE, OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT, JOINT GENERAL STAFF, PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE DIRECTORATE, MINISTRIES OF DEFENSE AND INTERIOR, PACIFICATION CENTER, AND FOREIGN MINISTRY. SINCE AN EFFECTIVE CEASEFIRE WOULD HAVE TO INCLUDE ALL OF INDOCHINA, NOT JUST VIETNAM, CONSULTATIONS WOULD HAVE TO BE HELD WITH CAMBODIAN AND LAOTIAN SPECIALISTS. QUANG NOTED THAT THE PROBLEM OF POLITICAL WARFARE WAS EQUALLY AS IMPORTANT AS MILITARY PROBLEMS; THE "SPECIAL RESEARCH COMMITTEE" WOULD THEREFORE HAVE TO INCLUDE MEMBERS EXPERIENCED IN

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

POLITICAL AS WELL AS MILITARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS. WITH REGARD TO MILITARY REPRESENTATIVES ON THE COMMITTEE, QUANG FELT THAT A GENERAL SHOULD BE APPOINTED THEIR SPOKESMAN BECAUSE "THOSE LITTLE GUYS LIKE THE CHIEF OF J-2 WERE NOT IMPORTANT AND THEY LACKED AUTHORITY TO COORDINATE MATTERS AT A HIGH LEVEL." QUANG REMINDED HIS GUESTS THAT THE PLANS WOULD HAVE TO BE COMPLETED ON AN URGENT BASIS. IN THIS CONTEXT, HE NOTED THAT IT WAS KNOWN FROM CAPTURED ENEMY DOCUMENTS THAT THE COMMUNISTS WERE STUDYING AND PREPARING FOR A CEASEFIRE. ONE OF THE OFFICERS ADMITTED THAT IF THERE WAS A CEASEFIRE RIGHT NOW, THE GVN WOULD NOT HAVE ANY PLAN FOR IT.

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

8. ON 28 AUGUST, QUANG REPORTED THE RESULTS OF THE ABOVE MEETING TO PRESIDENT THIEU. QUANG STATED THAT, WITH THE PRESIDENT'S APPROVAL, A "SPECIAL RESEARCH COMMITTEE" WOULD BE ESTABLISHED TO STUDY THE PROBLEMS IN DEPTH; THE COMMITTEE WOULD CONSIST OF THREE PANELS - MILITARY, POLITICAL WARFARE AND DIPLOMATIC - EACH OF WHICH WOULD RESEARCH MATTERS RELATED TO ITS PARTICULAR SPHERE. THIEU APPROVED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMITTEE, BUT WHEN QUANG MENTIONED THAT THEY MIGHT SEEK THE ADVICE OF MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS POLITICAL EXPERTS ON SOME POINTS, THIEU DISCOURAGED THAT, AND STATED HE WOULD RATHER WAIT FOR SOME TIME "BEFORE INVITING POLITICIANS" TO

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

PARTICIPATE IN THE PLANNING. IN LINE WITH QUANG'S SUGGESTION, THIEU NOTED THAT THE MILITARY REGION COMMANDERS AND THEIR DEPUTIES MIGHT BE INVITED TO SAIGON TO BE BRIEFED ON THE PLANS, FOLLOWING WHICH A SEMINAR WOULD BE HELD TO DISCUSS THE PLANS WITH PROVINCE CHIEFS.

CLASSIFIED BY RECORDED REPORTING OFFICER. EXEMPT FROM DECLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE OF E.O. 11652 EXEMPTION CATEGORY 5B (2). IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE DATE OF AUTOMATIC DECLASSIFICATION.

SECRET/SENSITIVE



A. J. [unclear]

## MEMORANDUM

## NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

INFORMATIONSECRET/SENSITIVE

August 12, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: MR. KISSINGER

FROM: JOHN D. NEGROPONTE *JDN*

SUBJECT: GVN Ceasefire Preparations and Political Developments

South Vietnamese President Thieu recently promulgated a decree under his new emergency power which substantially tightens controls on the local press. Thieu also is reportedly considering a similar decree to increase requirements for registrations of legal political parties. In line with these measures, justified on grounds of national security, Thieu has ordered detailed contingency planning for a ceasefire.

The Department of State is concerned that Thieu's use of his emergency power, together with accelerated recruiting for his own prospective Democratic Party and strong warning to his critics indicate a trend towards an authoritarian one-party stall akin to the government of late President Ngo Dinh Diem. The Department has submitted for our clearance a cable which instructs Ambassador Bunker to express official distress at this development and urge restraint on Thieu. (This cable will be staffed separately.) In a related area, Ambassador Bunker, himself, is worried that public disclosure of Thieu's ceasefire plans (which provide for "assassinations" of enemy cadre in the pre-ceasefire period and some post ceasefire military actions) may severely damage the GVN's image, and provide the enemy with a pretext to itself violate a ceasefire.

While we agree that disclosure to the ceasefire plans would be unfortunate and that Thieu obviously intends a more authoritarian regime, we are not alarmed by these developments. We believe that State's concern misses the main issue: how best can the GVN prepare itself for a prospective ceasefire and a political struggle with the enemy. The Department, in our view, once again is overreacting to the situation, imposing its own concern for niceties on South Vietnam and second guessing both Thieu and the American electorate.

Political Developments

Press law: On August 8, President Thieu promulgated a decree law which represents a major departure in regulating the press and generally tightens restrictions on newspapers. The most prominent feature of the decree law

SECRET/SENSITIVE

SECRET/SENSITIVE

2

is a provision requiring the deposit of \$46,511 by newspapers (\$23,255 if armed by a political party) to guarantee payment of fines and court costs in the event of a violation of the law. A second feature of the decree declares that newspapers confiscated a second time for having printed articles detrimental to security or public order may be ordered to suspend publication at a final court judgment.

Most observers expect that the law's high deposit requirement will force the closure of most of Saigon's 40-odd newspapers and that of the remaining half dozen publications, probably 4 will be pro-government. The embassy reports that reaction to the decree so far has been muted, although two prominent political moderates have strongly criticized the move in private conversations with our diplomats. Saigon publishers reportedly plan protest strikes but Administration supporters doubt the decree will be revised and belittle the prospects of serious, long-lasting opposition. Pro-Thieu spokesmen insist that the press law is justified by the need to protect national security in the face of Saigon's notoriously irresponsible publishers and the enemy's current offensive.

25X1

25X1

We believe that the new press restrictions deal with almost universal previous complaints in Vietnam about the near anarchic state of Saigon's newspapers, and the fear of NLF exploitations of the permissive regulations which governed it. The new law, if fairly implemented, will compel a sensible consolidation of newspapers and will not necessarily eliminate a responsible opposition. We also believe it highly unlikely that the measure will raise a significant controversy in Vietnam, in any way threaten Thieu, or seriously erode domestic support or our Vietnam policy.

Planned Political Party Statute:

President Thieu is contemplating a decree law which would tighten up requirements for the registration of political parties. The prospective decree probably will double presently loose requirements (10 provincial chapters of at least 500 members or 5 chapters plus 10 National Assembly members) and result in the elimination of all but a handful of Vietnam's parties which in any event are mostly fractional units. Thieu have confirmed that he is interested in rationalizing Vietnam's 30 parties into a two or three party system, but claim that the matter is not urgent and expect no immediate actions. The law, again if fairly implemented, would probably permit an opposition grouping. It should not affect Vietnam's two largest parties, one pro-Thieu and the other moderately opposition and is justified by its supporters on grounds of national security.

25X1

SECRET/SENSITIVE

SECRET/SENSITIVE

3

Critics of the prospective decree are concerned that the new provisions will favor the "Democracy Party" now being organized by President Thieu, and fear it will lead to a one party state. They complain of heavy-handed recruitment by party cadre and some speculate that Thieu intends to destroy all parties but his own. While Thieu's party, once formally established, will doubtless cut into old line national groupings, there are no indications the President intends to monopolize politics. As with the press code, Thieu is taking the onus of reforming a much maligned and overly permissive structure in order to build a more rational system better able to withstand enemy exploitations. Thieu himself, has often warned that permissive laws regulating the press and political parties are the two avenues through which the enemy can most easily prevail in a political struggle.

Comment: In our view, Thieu's use of the emergency powers is more than justified by the need to induce more order in Vietnam's public life at the time when the country faces its greatest test ever. Thieu clearly is telling his countrymen that today's critical situation and ceasefire prospects require an end to the economic and political self-indulgence of past years. If Vietnam is to succeed in the face of a reducing American presence, then it must accept greater discipline.

That Vietnam will turn gradually to a more authoritarian form of government is inevitable and has long been predicted. It also is sensible considering the enemy threat and the practice of nearby nations such as Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia which support far more authoritarian governments at peace. Most thoughtful Vietnamese would agree that their past permissiveness now is an unaffordable luxury. In any event, we do not anticipate a major opposition to the development of a tougher central government, or a serious threat to Thieu's own position. Considering the alternatives to Thieu (none except the NLF) and the current enemy threat, we believe that GVN loyalists will accept the decree measures despite initial dissent. As Thieu's critics themselves admit, they have no choice.

Thieu, of course, would promptly shelve any U.S. demarche on how he should run his government and doubtless will think us fools for cautioning him against tightening up the system. We have long lectured the Vietnamese on the need for political consolidation and public order. We would look silly if we now told Thieu to ease off from a course of action designed to accomplish this objective.

Thieu, lastly, is no tyrant and does not share Ngo Dinh Diem's credo of "if you're not with me you're against me." Far more flexible than Diem, Thieu

SECRET/SENSITIVE

SECRET/SENSITIVE

4

maintains a third ground of allowing moderate opposition to his regime. We expect that he will continue this course.

Thieu now is desperately trying to cope with the military situations and ceasefire prospects and has performed reasonably well so far. Rather than harass him with instructions on how to run his country, we should conserve our leverage for bigger issues such as negotiations.

25X1

ARVN Ceasefire Planning

Thieu's recent use of the emergency powers supplements ceasefire contingency planning which ARVN has been conducting since April 1972. Our Saigon Embassy recently has obtained [redacted] -copies of very generalized ceasefire plans for JGS (Tab A), Corps (Tab B) and province levels (Tab C). These plans, while more horatory than specific, are remarkable for their hard-headed assumptions and the very fact of their existence, which is unprecedented.

The JGS plan, at Tab A, for instance, assumes a sudden, in-place ceasefire under which allied forces would be completely withdrawn and North Vietnamese units would remain in the South. The plan also assumes that enemy forces will violate the ceasefire, that a vigorous political struggle will continue against the Saigon government, and that international supervision will not necessarily occur. A parallel regional ceasefire plan (Tab B) makes the further assumption that unoccupied areas will exist at the outset of the ceasefire, while a province level document (Tab C) foresees a major enemy offensive to seize territory before a ceasefire.

To deal with this situation, all plans require efforts to extend GVN control "as fast and as far as possible" in the pre-ceasefire period (Phase I). They openly provide for the "assassination of important enemy cadre" in this period and urge that GVN forces be indoctrinated not to believe a ceasefire means the end of the war. During the actual ceasefire period (Phase II) GVN forces are to "occupy as many different positions as possible", "check all VC attempts to display their presence" and "make every effort to hold the people and territory", to "avoid leaving any tell tale marks or any violations of the ceasefire order". Annexes to the JGS plan provide for the continuation of the Phoenix program during the ceasefire, and instruct that efforts be made to proselytize enemy POWS.

One of President Thieu's closest advisers, Lt. General Dang Van Quang, has expressed dissatisfaction with the vagueness of the GVN ceasefire papers. He has requested, for example, that further study be made of readying the general

SECRET/SENSITIVE

SECRET/SENSITIVE

5

reserves and strengthening the government's position prior to a ceasefire and of scenarios implementing the ceasefire. In discussing ceasefire problems, Quang also raised difficult questions on how to deal with the NLF main force and local guerrilla, and expressed concern over how regrouping of NVA forces might be effected.

While we believe that these plans contain a realistic and comprehensive, if vague ceasefire approach, Ambassador Bunker has expressed strong regret that they envisage GVN assassination and land grab programs following an end of hostilities. He fears public disclosure will place the onus for the breakdown of peace arrangements on the GVN and believes it "extremely important that the GVN take no steps which the Communists could use in justification of their own ceasefire violations".

The Embassy concerns, we believe, miss the main point in the GVN's ceasefire planning--namely that it is compatible with our own assumptions but needs further refinement in its details. Instead of criticizing the documents for their candor and realism, our Mission in Saigon should encourage this effort and perhaps even work with the GVN in joint planning sessions to achieve as workable and comprehensive a program as possible.

The GVN's plans contain important gaps, and should be remedied. They, for example, do not discuss disposition of enemy forces, facilities or powers of control commissions, or the possibility that forms of civilian population control such as road checks, curfews, and travel restrictions will also be lifted. The document also does not treat with the fate of civilian prisoners or of refugees who may wish to return home and omits the whole subject of implementing a political settlement. While the GVN ceasefire plans doubtless are more comprehensive than whatever we have prepared, they do reveal the tremendous complexity of the issues and how little detailed staffing has actually been done in this area.

In answer to the Embassy's concern, we clearly must accept that both sides will seek to maximize their positions in a ceasefire. There will be political violence on both sides. This we cannot avoid. Indeed COSVN's mid-July assessment openly urges ceasefire violations and continued eliminations despite the presence of a control commission at national or regional levels. We frankly would look more than silly in advising Thieu to play by the Marquis of Queensbury rules in dealing with a ceasefire situation. After all, an in-place ceasefire is more our idea than his, and he has gone some distance to accommodate our views on the matter.

SECRET/SENSITIVE

SECRET/SENSITIVE

6

While the GVN plans so far adhere to the 8-point allied proposal of January 26, and are premised on enemy acceptance of this proposal, Thieu's public position remains somewhat ambiguous on an in-place ceasefire. Although Foreign Minister Lam and his ministry spokesman have publically indicated that the GVN might require NVA troop withdrawals as a ceasefire prerequisite, President Thieu did not raise this point in a major speech on August 4. In discussing ceasefire conditions, Thieu merely repeated earlier demands that the ceasefire be Indochina-wide, supervised and internationally guaranteed. Thieu, however, has previously expressed strong distaste in public for an in-place ceasefire which would leave the enemy with administrative/political control of areas in South Vietnam. He maintains that enemy controlled areas should be defined as military regroupment points only with the GVN in charge of administration. Such a "leopard-spot" ceasefire could be construed as an indirect partition of GVN territory into Saigon and NLF portions and thus contravenes Thieu's often repeated "four noes" policy (no cessation of territory, no coalition, no legal Communist party, no "Communist style" neutralism). While we don't suggest that Thieu would balk at a full in-place ceasefire, we do perceive grounds on which he and his military leaders could object, especially if the NVA remain in possessing the territories they now occupy.

Instead of focusing on the public relations aspects of ceasefire and internal political preparations, we should use our "leverage" to keep the GVN on board our negotiations track and to better prepare it for a ceasefire contingency.

SECRET/SENSITIVE